

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (currently amended) A device comprising:
at least one stencil configured to apply a pattern onto a substantially flat surface of an article;
a stencil holder comprising a base member;
wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises ~~first~~ means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;
wherein the base member of the stencil holder comprises a first recess ~~second means for positively securing within circumferential boundaries of the first recess~~ the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder in a predetermined position relative to the at least one stencil;
wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the first recess ~~second means comprise a first recess provided in the stencil holder wherein the first recess provides a positive securing action for the surface of the article.~~
2. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1, further comprising an adapter configured to be inserted into the first recess for ~~adjusting~~ reducing a size of the first recess to a size varying sizes of the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article ~~provide the positive securing action.~~
3. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1, wherein the ~~first means for securing~~ comprise elements projecting upwardly from the stencil holder.
4. (original) The device according to claim 3, wherein the at least one stencil has perforations, wherein the elements are short securing pins configured to match the perforations provided in the at least one stencil.
5. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1, wherein the ~~first means for securing~~ comprises a second recess provided in the base member of the stencil holder and surrounding the first recess, wherein the second recess is configured such that, when the at least one stencil is inserted into the second recess, the at least one stencil and the stencil holder form a substantially flush surface.
6. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1, wherein two of the at least one stencil are provided, wherein the two stencils are embossing stencils and

a first one of the embossing stencils is placed into the stencil holder underneath the surface of the article and a second one of the embossing stencils is placed on top of the surface of the article and secured by the first means for securing.

7. (currently amended) A stencil holder for at least one stencil for applying a pattern to a surface of an article, the stencil holder comprising:

a base member comprising first means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder;

wherein the base member comprises a recess ~~second means for positively securing the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder~~ when placing the article into the first recess;

wherein the means for securing is positioned outside of the recess ~~second means comprise a first recess provided in the base member, wherein the first recess provides a positive securing action for the surface of the article.~~

8. (currently amended) The device according to claim 7, further comprising an adapter configured to be inserted into the first recess for adjusting ~~reducing~~ a size of the first recess to a size ~~varying sizes~~ of the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article ~~provide the positive securing action.~~

9. (currently amended) The stencil holder according to claim 7, wherein the first means for securing comprise elements projecting upwardly from the base member.

10. (original) The stencil holder according to claim 9, wherein the elements are short securing pins configured to match perforations provided in the at least one stencil.

11. (original) The stencil holder according to claim 9, wherein the base member has receiving openings and wherein the elements projecting upwardly from the base member are insertable into the receiving openings in different arrangements.

12. (currently amended) An adapter for use with a stencil and a stencil holder ~~a device according to claim 4~~, the adapter comprising a base element configured to adjust reduce a size of a recess ~~means for securing a predetermined position of a surface of an article relative to a~~ the stencil holder to a certain size of the article.

13. (currently amended) The adapter according to claim 12, wherein the

base element is configured to adjust the recess means for securing to a standard paper size.

14. (original) The adapter according to claim 12, wherein the base element is a bar, an angle piece, a U-shaped frame open at one side, or a circumferentially extending frame.

15. (original) The adapter according to claim 12, wherein the base element is a plate having a recess for the surface of the article.

16. (currently amended) A method for applying a pattern onto a substantially flat surface by using a device comprising at least one stencil configured to apply a pattern onto a substantially flat surface of an article; a stencil holder; wherein the stencil holder comprises first means for securing the at least one stencil in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder; wherein the stencil holder comprises a recess ~~second means for positively securing the surface of the article onto which the pattern is to be applied relative to the stencil holder; wherein the second means for securing is positioned outside of the recess~~ ~~comprise a first recess provided in the stencil holder wherein first recess provides a positive securing action for the surface of the article;~~ the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the surface of the article into the stencil holder and positively securing the surface in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder in the recess by circumferential boundaries of the recess;

placing a first stencil onto the stencil holder and the surface of the article in a predetermined position relative to the stencil holder; and

applying a pattern provided by the first stencil onto the surface of the article.

17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of placing an adapter into the recess before the step of inserting for adjusting reducing a size of the recess to the surface of the article so that the recess and the adapter together positively secure the surface of the article.

18. (original) The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of placing a second stencil into the stencil holder before inserting the surface of the article into the stencil holder, wherein the first and second stencils are embossing stencils and in the step of applying a pattern an embossed pattern is created.